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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001347

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/01/2027
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [PTER](#) [US](#) [IR](#) [SY](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: PKK TRAIN DERAILMENT REVEALS ARMS FROM IRAN

REF: TD-314/42628-07

Classified By: DCM NANCY MCELDFOWNEY FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D).

[¶1.](#) (S/NF) Summary: Weapons were found in the wreckage of a Turkish train coming from Iran and bound for Syria derailed by a PKK mine in Bingol province on May 25. Chief of Defense General Yasar Buyukanit confirmed to reporters the presence of un-manifested weapons on the train. See ref for other agencies' reporting on this subject. Meanwhile there is press speculation of a U.S. connection to the incident. We have urged the GOT to share details with us and the UN Iran Sanctions Committee as information becomes available. The incident highlights the need for enhanced monitoring equipment on the heavily trafficked Iranian and Syrian borders, which we are prepared to provide under the EXBS program upon completion of a bilateral EXBS agreement. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (U) On May 25, an explosive device reportedly planted by the terrorist PKK organization derailed a Turkish freight train near the town of Genc in Bingol province in southeastern Turkey. According to press reports, weapons were found on the train, including sniper rifles, mortars, and rocket launcher tubes. A Bingol prosecutor investigating the train has reportedly denied the existence of rockets on the train, as initially reported by the press, but has been unclear about other weapons. There has been speculation in the press that U.S.-origin weapons were involved and that the U.S. may have provided PKK terrorists information about the train prior to the attack.

[¶3.](#) (U) Chief of Defense General Yasar Buyukanit told reporters May 31 that weapons were indeed found on the train. He did not specify the types of weapons but said an investigation is underway. All press reports indicate the train had come from Iran and was bound for Syria, and its cargo was manifested as construction materials. The independent Hurriyet newspaper reports that the train's bill of lading indicates two containers were loaded in Tehran for delivery to Damascus. The originating company is reportedly the Iranian Behnam Shahriyari Trading Company and the recipient is listed as the Syrian al-Joori Trading Company. The cargo is described as concrete, fiberglass, and roof planking. Hurriyet alleges that the local prosecutor's report lists weapons found in one of the containers, which

were handed over to the Jandarma.

¶4. (C) Foreign Ministry officials have told us they have no information on the train or its cargo and have been unwilling to discuss the matter further with us. MFA Deputy Director General for South Asia Babur Hizlan told us June 1 that judicial officials in Bingol province have been unwilling to share their findings with the MFA while the investigation is ongoing.

¶5. (C) The discovery of weapons on a train from Iran bound for Syria demonstrates the vulnerability of customs controls on the most direct route from Iran to Syria. If confirmed, the government of Turkey is obligated to report the find under UNSCR 1747. We will continue to press the MFA to share whatever information it receives both with us and with the UN Iran Sanctions Committee.

¶6. (C) The incident also highlights the need to assist Turkey to strengthen its border controls. We are prepared to provide Turkey significant amounts of modern border inspection and detection equipment under the EXBS program pending final implementation of that agreement by the Turkish government. The EXBS Agreement was ratified by the Turkish parliament and signed by President Sezer earlier this year. Implementing legislation is awaiting approval by the Council of Ministers, whereupon it will be submitted to the president for signature. The agreement will come into effect upon exchange of diplomatic notes.

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